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Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Report on the meetings of the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development

I. Introduction

1. At its thirtieth session, in 1997, the Commission on Population and Development authorized the Bureau, in preparation for its sessions, to hold intersessional meetings on a yearly basis.[1] The practice of the Bureau was to hold one intersessional meeting each year on which a report was presented to the Commission by the Chairman of the Bureau. In 2006, at its thirty-ninth session, the Commission, in its resolution 2006/1 on its methods of work, requested the Bureau of the Commission to meet as frequently as necessary in preparation for the annual sessions of the Commission. The Commission also stressed the importance of making written reports on the meetings of the Bureau.[2] In accordance with resolution 2006/1, the Bureau held three meetings between May 2006 and mid-January 2007 and may convene others before the fortieth session of the Commission resumes on 9 April 2007. The three meetings of the Bureau held so far took place in New York on 3 November 2006, 7 December 2006 and 16 January 2007.

2. The first meeting of the Bureau, on 3 November 2006, was attended by Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury (Chairman), Abdellah Benmellouk, Thomas Gass and Andriy Nikitov. Those four were also present at the second meeting, on 7 December 2006, Álvaro Portillo participated in the meeting via teleconference. At the third meeting, on 16 January 2007, Mr. Benmellouk served as Chairman in the absence of Mr. Chowdhury, and the other participants were Mr. Gass and Mr. Nikitov. The Director of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social

* E/CN.9/2007/1.

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 5* (E/1997/25), para. 52.

[2] Commission on Population and Development decision 2005/2.

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Affairs of the Secretariat and two representatives of the United Nations Population Fund were present at all meetings of the Bureau.

3. The present report summarizes the discussions of the Bureau at those meetings, as well as the conclusions reached and the recommendations made.

II. Summary of the deliberations of the Bureau

A. Organization of work for the fortieth session of the Commission

4. The Bureau reviewed the organization of work for the fortieth session and found it acceptable.

B. Keynote speakers

5. At its thirty-eighth session, in its decision 2005/2, the Commission welcomed the format of inviting keynote speakers to the sessions of the Commission and requested the Bureau to make the necessary arrangements for their participation and to inform members accordingly. In accordance with that decision, the Bureau suggested that three keynote speakers be invited to address the Commission on the special theme "The changing age structures of populations and their implications for development" and that each speaker be allotted an hour to make a presentation and have an interactive dialogue with members of the Commission. The Bureau selected Somnath Chatterji, Ronald Lee and Nyovani Madise as keynote speakers. Mr. Chatterji, who is the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) Multi-Country Studies team, will address the health aspects of ageing. Ronald Lee is Professor of demography and economics at the University of California at Berkeley; he will consider the economic and demographic aspects of intergenerational transfers. Ms. Madise, who is a senior researcher at the African Population and Health Research Centre in Nairobi, will focus on Africa's young populations. As has become customary, the Bureau recommended that the working group be adjourned during the presentations made by keynote speakers.

C. Participation of relevant United Nations entities in the Commission on Population and Development

6. The Bureau noted that the topic of the fortieth session was relevant for a number of United Nations entities, such as WHO and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Thus, the Bureau requested the Chairman to write to the relevant United Nations entities to encourage their participation in the Commission's session and also to invite them to consider organizing side events during the fortieth session of the Commission. The Bureau felt strongly that the Commission benefited from the participation of relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system as well as from the presentations made by keynote speakers and experts participating in side events.

D. Relationship of the Commission on Population and Development with the Economic and Social Council

7. The Bureau took note of the meetings of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council with the Chairpersons of the functional commissions of the Council held in Geneva on 7 July 2006 and in New York on 15 January 2007. Thomas Gass represented the Chairman of the Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development in Geneva and Iftekhar Chowdhury represented the Bureau of the Commission at the New York meeting.

8. The second meeting of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council with the Chairpersons of the functional commissions had the objective of considering how the functional commissions could strengthen their contribution to the work of the reformed Council, in the light of the implications of General Assembly resolution 61/16. Attention was focused mostly on the potential contributions of the functional commissions to the annual ministerial review, the Development Cooperation Forum and the policy dialogue. Specifically, the Chairman of the Bureau of the Council asked participants to focus on three questions:

(a) Given the new functions of the Council, how could each functional commission realign its work so as to contribute to the Annual Ministerial Review?

(b) Could the functional commissions add to their work programmes a standing item on their contribution to the work of the Council?

(c) Was there any further guidance that the functional commissions needed from the Council to improve policy coherence and enhance their future contributions?

9. The Chairpersons of the functional commissions, including the Commission on Population and Development, pledged their full support to and cooperation with the Bureau of the Council in seeking ways to make useful contributions to the annual ministerial reviews. Most indicated that further guidance from the Council would be welcome and that it was important for the Council to adopt a multi-year work programme so that each commission could, within its mandate, prepare and provide timely input to the work of the Council. It was also suggested that more meetings between the Bureau of the Council and the Chairs of the functional commissions would be useful for discussing the implications of the new methods of work of the Council.

10. In view of the foregoing, the Bureau of the Commission considered how the Commission could address the implications of Economic and Social Council reform for its work. After consideration of a number of options, the Bureau decided to recommend that the Commission consider the issue under agenda item 2, entitled "Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters". It was suggested that an hour and a half be allocated to inform members of the Commission about the new mode of operation of the Council, the evolving status of preparation of the 2007 annual ministerial review, the policy dialogue and the Development Cooperation Forum, and their implications for the work of the Commission. The Bureau requested that the secretariat prepare a conference room paper on this issue to provide the necessary background information.

E. Implications of relevant General Assembly resolutions for the work of the Commission

11. The Bureau took note of General Assembly resolution 61/143, "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women", in which the Assembly invited "the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and other relevant United Nations bodies to discuss, by 2008, within their respective mandates, the question of violence against women in all its forms and manifestations, bearing in mind the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the in-depth study on violence against women, and to set priorities for addressing this issue in their future efforts and work programmes and to transmit the outcome of those discussions to the Secretary-General for his annual report to the General Assembly". The Bureau also took note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women" (A/61/122 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) and recommended that it be made available to the members of the Commission during the resumed session in April.

12. After considering several options for responding to the request made in General Assembly resolution 61/143, the Bureau agreed to invite Member States to include in their reports on national experience on population matters under agenda item 4 a reflection on the issue of violence against women and of the strategies their respective Governments have adopted to combat it. In order to inform the Commission and focus the debate on this emerging issue, the Bureau recommended that an expert on the topic be invited to give a short presentation to the Commission.

F. Special theme for the forty-second session of the Commission

13. The Bureau recalled the Commission's decision 2006/101, in which it decided that the special theme for its forty-first session, in 2008, would be "Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development". The Bureau took note of the need to establish a multi-year work programme for the Commission and discussed the possible options for 2009.

14. It was noted that every five years since 1974 the Commission had conducted a review and appraisal of the implementation of the action plan in force. Since 1994 there had been two five-year reviews of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. The first five-year review, held in 1999, was a major event involving a special session of the General Assembly. The second, held in 2004, had been conducted by the Commission, and its results had influenced the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It was also noted that a review of the Millennium Declaration would take place in 2010 and that, if the Commission conducted an examination of the contribution of the Programme of Action to development in 2009, it would be well positioned to make a timely contribution to the 2010 review by the General Assembly of the achievement of the goals set in the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Hence, the Bureau recommended that the special theme for 2009 be "The contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to development, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals".

G. Resolutions and decisions

15. The Bureau recommended that the Commission consider adopting (a) a decision on the agenda for the forty-first session, (b) a decision on the themes associated with a multi-year work programme and establishing a theme for the forty-second session, in 2009, and (c) a resolution on the special theme of the fortieth session, "The changing age structures of populations and their implications for development".

16. As for previous sessions, the Bureau recommended that a working group be established at the start of the resumed fortieth session of the Commission to discuss issues that might result in resolutions or decisions. The working group should begin its work on the afternoon of the first day of the resumed session of the Commission. The Bureau also recommended that the Population Division prepare for the Chairman of the Commission initial drafts of resolutions and decisions that might facilitate the deliberations of the working group. As in previous years, the Bureau requested that the Chairman's drafts be made available to the regional groups prior to the resumption of the fortieth session of the Commission. Taking account of the fact that the week before the resumption of the fortieth session is a holiday period for many Member States, the Bureau requested that the drafts be made available, on an exceptional basis, at least two weeks before the resumption of the session.

H. Briefing for members of the Commission

17. The Bureau recommended that the Director of the Population Division organize, at least two weeks prior to the resumption of the fortieth session of the Commission, a briefing for delegations on the status of documentation for the session, the organization of work and the resolutions and decisions likely to be considered by the Commission.

18. The Bureau stressed the importance of the timely availability of documents for the fortieth session of the Commission in order to facilitate the preparation of statements by delegations. The Bureau endorsed the posting of advance unedited versions of the documents on the Internet.

I. Work programme of the Secretariat in the field of population

19. The Bureau noted that the work programme of the Population Division responded with flexibility to the changing needs of Member States and stressed the importance of maintaining a comprehensive approach to population and development issues.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

20. The Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development met three times, on 3 November 2006, 7 December 2006 and 16 January 2007. The conclusions and recommendations resulting from those three meetings are summarized below.

21. **The Bureau suggested that three keynote speakers be invited to address the Commission on the special theme "The changing age structures of populations and their implications for development".**

22. **The Bureau recommended that a discussion on how the Commission could realign its work programme in order to be able to make a constructive contribution to the work of the reformed Economic and Social Council, in particular to the annual ministerial review, be taken up under agenda item 2, entitled "Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters". The Bureau requested that a conference room paper on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16, as it relates to the work of the Commission development, be prepared for circulation to all members of the Commission.**

23. **In response to General Assembly resolution 61/143, entitled "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women", the Bureau agreed to invite Member States to include in their reports on national experience on population matters under agenda item 4 a reflection on the issue of violence against women and of the strategies their respective Governments have adopted to combat it. In order to inform the Commission and focus the debate on this emerging issue, the Bureau recommended that an expert on the topic be invited to give a short presentation to the Commission.**

24. **The Bureau took note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women" (A/61/122 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) and recommended that it be made available to the members of the Commission during the resumed session, in April.**

25. **The Bureau recommended that the special theme for 2009 be "The contribution of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to development, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals".**

26. **The Bureau recommended that the Commission consider adopting (a) a decision on the agenda for the forty-first session, (b) a decision on the themes associated with a multi-year work programme and establishing a theme for the forty-second session, in 2009, and (c) a resolution on the special theme of the fortieth session, "The changing age structures of populations and their implications for development".**

27. **The Bureau requested that the Population Division prepare for the Chairman of the Commission initial drafts of resolutions and decisions that might facilitate the deliberations of the working group. The Bureau requested that the Chairman's drafts be made available to the regional groups at least two weeks prior to the resumption of the fortieth session of the Commission.**

28. **The Bureau recommended that the Director of the Population Division organize, at least two weeks prior to the resumption of the fortieth session of the Commission, a briefing for delegations on the status of documentation for the session, the organization of work and the resolutions and decisions likely to be considered by the Commission.**